Highly Effective Schools Accreditation Plan

Mt. Vernon High School

Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation

8112 North 200 West, Fortville, Indiana 46040

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MT. VERNON HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL PROFILE

Mt. Vernon High School is located in Fortville, Indiana, and is part of the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation which serves the northwest portion of Hancock County. Within the boundaries of the Mt. Vernon School Corporation are several small towns which make up the school community. To the north are the towns of Fortville, McCordsville, Woodbury and Mohawk. The southern part of the district is made up of Mt. Comfort, Cumberland and Philadelphia. The small town atmosphere is one of the attractions, which brings families from the city to settle in the country. The Mt. Vernon School district is located near 3 major interstates, I-70, I-69 and I-465 which gives easy access for Hancock County residents to work in the surrounding cities such as Indianapolis, Muncie, and Anderson.

According to the most recent demographic data, Mt. Vernon High School has a current enrollment of 1372 students. 231 students are enrolled as virtual students for the 2020-2021 school year. Class cohort enrollment numbers are as follows: Cohort 2021 - 311 students; Cohort 2022 - 358 students; Cohort 2023 - 325 students; Cohort 2024 - 378 students. The current diversity statistics of our student population are as follows: White - 78.9%; Black/African-American - 8.7%; Multiracial - 5.6%; Hispanic - 5.0%; Native American - 0.2%. Mt. Vernon High School has 1.4 students that qualify as English Language Learners. 22.1% of our student population qualify as economically disadvantaged and 12.2% of our student population qualify for special education services.

Mt. Vernon High School has committed to implementing Professional Learning Communities within our school along with all other schools in the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation. We have committed to the vision that all students can and will learn at high levels, and have actively taken steps to make that vision a reality.

MAINTENANCE PLAN

Professional Learning Communities: A Focus on Learning

The mission of the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation and Mt. Vernon High School is to Engage, Educate and Empower today's students to seize tomorrow's opportunities. Our vision states, "Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation is where parents choose to send their children, students are successful, highly qualified personnel desire to work, and the community is proud to support. We are committed to serving a diverse population in a safe, secure, and challenging learning environment where students are engaged in rigorous, relevant and technologically-enhanced curriculum. Student success is nurtured through diverse instructional methods enabled by partnerships fostered between students, parents, school, and community. A strategic and fiscally responsible approach ensures a sustainable, highly effective learning experience inside and outside the classroom. We respect the uniqueness of each student as we engage, educate, and empower them to seize their futures as responsible members of society." All members of the school community have worked to create an environment where the core values and beliefs that are included within our mission and vision are brought to fruition.

In order to provide our students with a rigorous, relevant, and technology-enhanced curriculum, our staff has worked to set learning goals through developing "essential learnings" which provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all our students. Staff have also developed common formative and summative assessments for these essential learnings so that progress toward mastery of those learning targets can be measured and monitored so we can ensure that all students are progressing toward high levels of learning.

Work in this particular area has been curated on our district's curriculum website. This site contains all of the Essential Learnings for all courses across the entire corporation in organized documents, which makes the Essential Learnings easily accessible. Additionally, the Common Formative Assessments that have been developed to assess these Essential Learnings are also located in these shared files (permissions are set for which groups can access particular materials in these shared files). Additionally, our curriculum team at the district level maintains a checklist document which is reviewed periodically to record which subjects, departments, and/or courses have fully-developed Essential Learning documents and Common Formative Assessments as well as where there are still areas under development. This checklist is in turn used by the curriculum team and administration to identify teams that may need additional support.

Analysis of student results data drives our work to both intervene when students have not yet mastered the targeted essential learnings and to enrich learning when they have mastered it. This data analysis also helps to guide our own professional development as we can use it to help pinpoint and identify what forms of professional development would be the most impactful for our students' learning. Professional Learning Community teams maintain documents recording students' progress toward mastery of the Essential Learnings identified for that subject or course. The analysis of this result data is vital in guiding instructional decisions to best help our students achieve their highest levels of learning.

Professional Learning Communities: A Collaborative Culture and Collective Responsibility

In order to provide the time and opportunity for a collaborative culture and a collective responsibility for our students, MVCSC and Mt. Vernon High School operate on an "Early Release" schedule each Wednesday throughout the school year, with the exception of the first and last Wednesday of the school year. Each MVCSC school dismisses students 45 minutes early. After dismissal, teachers meet with their Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams and engage in the activities of a PLC. Each collaborative team's work is guided with what we term an "Instructional Planning Sheet" which provides a framework for the teams to address each of the four essential questions of the PLC process. This includes collaborative teams selecting an essential learning to focus upon and evaluating the curriculum to ensure that it will fully address that given learning target, building assessments to measure the students' learning, reviewing and analyzing achievement data of students from assessments, determining next steps for teaching and learning based on the data, and/or identifying the most effective and powerful instructional practices. By working in this collaborative manner, PLC teams are able to work together to ensure that ALL our students are able to progress toward mastery and high levels of achievement.

Professional Learning Communities: A Results Orientation

Teachers at each grade level have identified essential learning targets for content areas. They have also connected those essential learning targets to prioritized state standards. Professional Learning Community team members work collaboratively to track progress on

developed common formative assessments and common summative assessments. These PLC

teams use Instructional Planning Sheets, a progress monitoring tracking tool to evaluate

assessment data. The PLC teams use the data to determine which students have mastered the

essential learning targets, need additional instruction and interventions, or need enrichment

activities. Teachers also use the assessment data to determine if adjustments need to be made to

their instructional strategies and practices. When students are identified as needing additional

support, the PLC team establishes research-based interventions to implement at the Tier II level.

Specific times have been designated during the school day in order for these interventions to be

implemented to support students that need them. Mt. Vernon High School has a daily Student

Resource Time (SRT), which serves as one of those times where students can receive these

supports. Additionally, students that might need this sort of additional support can also receive

these interventions during their study hall times. Refining our intervention practices and

program at MVHS is an area that we will continue to work to develop throughout this school

year. Students receiving interventions are reassessed and their progress is monitored to

determine if interventions have been effective in helping students master learning targets. Mt.

Vernon High School will maintain performance in this area by continuing to designate 45

minutes weekly for PLC team meeting time. Additionally, school administrators will continue to

monitor the work of the teams and provide instructional support to teachers to ensure that all

students achieve at high levels.

High Reliability Schools Level 1: A Safe, Supportive, and Collaborative Culture

To ensure that we maintain a safe, supportive collaborative culture at MVCSC and Mt.

Vernon High School we have created leadership teams. Leadership team members are made up

of one teacher from each department as well as building administration. Leadership teams meet monthly and as needed to support and communicate various district and school based initiatives. After each of these meetings the team members meet with their department teams to ensure all have a voice in the decision making process. The leadership team is asked to provide feedback to building administration to ensure supportive and collaborative decisions will be made. One of the first tools that our leadership team developed was a matrix to show the different types of decisions that could be made within the school as well as what types of topics that would be included in each of those areas. The basic premise is that there are three levels of decisions. The first level involves decisions that individual staff members or teams will make with full autonomy. The second level involves decisions in which staff members routinely have direct input. This area is where collaborative decision-making is emphasized. The general process involves gathering information from stakeholders, discussing possible solutions, and then arriving at consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, then further ideas are explored. The third level involves decisions school administrators make without staff input. THe purpose of this is to clearly delineate how the collaborative decision-making process works and what types of topics would fall into each category. This organization structure is reviewed periodically to make appropriate adjustments as needed. An example of this [matrix can be found here](.). The leadership team has been instrumental to the climate and culture at MVCSC and Mt. Vernon High School. This team has focused our building into places where all voices are heard and valued, and there is a clear process where feedback from a wide-variety of perspectives is taken into account prior to decisions being made.

Teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities weekly on Wednesday for one hour. Based upon our Essential Learnings (ELs, a focused curriculum that was created using a

district team), the department teams analyze student results data, set SMART goals to help guide

students toward appropriate mastery of the ELs, determine appropriate interventions and/or

enrichment opportunities, and identify powerful instructional practices. Assessment data is

collected and archived by each department, and we are beginning to develop a data dashboard

which would make all of this information more accessible to staff members that would need

access to it to help inform instructional decisions. MVCSC will utilize the summer of 2021 to

create Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) that are aligned to the ELs to further ensure

student achievement.

Although the leadership team has been integral in maintaining a safe, supportive and

collaborative environment, we have work to do. Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year,

teachers will be completing instructional rounds with their peers. These visits will be guided by

the MVCSC Instructional Model. The visiting team will have parameters to check off and make

notes of what they observe, not what they do not observe. Once instructional rounds are

complete for each team, we will meet as a team to debrief and share the Instructional Model

sheet with the teachers we visited. These rounds are meant to highlight what teachers are doing

well and are non-punitive or evaluative in nature.

High Reliability Schools Level 2: Effective Teaching in Every Classroom

MVCSC currently employs the RISE Rubric for teacher evaluation and utilizes Standards

for Success as the vehicle to curate observations and evaluations. As part of our evaluation

process, teachers receive short "walkthrough" observations by their evaluators throughout the

year. While the RISE Rubric will continue to serve as the evaluation tool for teachers, work is

currently underway to more tightly link the RISE Rubric and concepts found in *The New Art and*

Science of Teaching (NASoT) which will allow us to more fully develop our model of instruction.

Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, MVCSC will implement a new walkthrough model that is directly related to the ten design questions in *The New Art and Science of Teaching*. Additionally, a crosswalk between the NASoT and the RISE Rubric has been identified. This rubric, where only practices that are observed are noted, serves as an instructional snapshot of what we should see in a classroom setting.

2021-2022 MVCSC Classroom Walkthrough Model

Ten Design Areas	
✔ YES	INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE
Feedback	
	1 - Learning goals are clearly communicated (*RISE 2.1*)
	2 - Assessments are used to inform instruction and/or differentiation *(RISE 2.5)*
Content	
	3 - Direction instruction provided (chunking content, processing content, and/or recording and representing content)
	4 - Practicing and deepening lessons (structured practice sessions, examining similarities and differences, and/or examining errors in reasoning) *(RISE 2.6)*
	5 - Conducting knowledge application lessons (cognitively complex tasks, providing resources/guidance, and/or generating and defending claims) *(RISE 2.6)*
	6 - Using effective strategies (previewing, highlighting critical information, reviewing content, revising knowledge, reflecting on learning, assigning purposeful homework, elaborating on information, and/or organizing students to interact)
Context	

	7 - Teacher notices when students are not engaged and adapts behavior to re engage students *(RISE 2.3)*
	8 - Implementing rules and procedures *(RISE 2.7)*
	9 - Building relationships *(RISE 2.8)*
	10 - Communicating high expectations *(RISE 2.9)*

To orchestrate growth in teaching practices at the classroom level, the walkthrough tool (Instructional Snapshot) will also be utilized as a framework for instructional rounds. The Instructional Snapshot approach to instructional rounds is different from the problem-based approach touted by Elizabeth City, but schools and their leadership teams may choose to focus on one area of the NASoT Snapshot that is most closely related to their individual school improvement plan.

Rounding Process

School leadership teams will identify at least two times during the school year where all teachers will conduct instructional rounds. Small teams of teachers will visit a set number of classrooms and observe behaviors related to the NASoT Snapshot. Following observations, the small teams will discuss what they saw during their 10-15 minute visit. As the leader of the team (administration, or specialist) facilitates the debriefing conversation, team members (teachers) will undoubtedly seek understanding how an observed colleague designed strategies to align with one or more of the elements from NASoT. As a resource, each faculty member will be provided with their own copy of *The Handbook for the New Art and Science of Teaching*. As the purpose of an instruction round is to focus on what the observer learns, teachers will be asked to declare areas of their instruction they wish to improve as related to NASoT.

Data Reviews and Growth

With this school year being the first where we have implemented instructional rounds, strategies for improvement will be more invitational. Cumulative data from rounds and from walkthroughs by administrators will be curated for each faculty to track and to help see where their collective instructional strengths lie. Opportunities to dive deeper into the 43 elements within the ten design questions as well as the associated instructional strategies will be ongoing during regular staff meetings throughout the year. Additionally, teachers will be provided opportunities for professional development. For example, English and math teachers are participating in a series of professional development sessions to align our curriculum to better prepare students for the as Indiana transitions to using the SAT as the state exam. Additionally, our math and reading specialists are involved in several professional development opportunities, including ways to accelerate learning and prepare for standardized testing and training related to *The New Art and Science of Teaching Handbook*. Finally, staff members will be participating in various professional development sessions related to creating more effective assessments which will in turn produce more high-quality data in order to drive instructional decisions.

High Reliability Schools Level 3: A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation and Mt. Vernon High School have developed a system for creating our Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum. We have a committee of teachers representing grade levels, teaching teams, and schools who volunteer to be a part of our curriculum collaborators committee. This committee's work started by identifying essential standards deemed by teachers to be critical for students to learn from each content area and grade

level. These essential standards we termed "essential learnings" or ELs and these ELs have

resulted in the design of our Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum. The curriculum collaborator

committee categorized ELs by nine week quarter views and have curated our curriculum on our

curriculum website that all staff can access. One of the main reasons for collaborative teams

organizing the ELs into nine week quarter views was to make sure that the curriculum remained

viable in that teachers would have sufficient time in order to guide students toward mastering the

ELs. These quarter views served as a general guide for teachers to create more specific

long-range planning calendars which in turn guided daily lesson planning. Curriculum

Collaborator committee members continue to meet periodically to unpack standards and adjust

ELs as necessary.

Our individual school PLC teams collect student pre, post, and post-post data on each of

their grade-level and content area ELs to determine if all students are learning. PLC teams use

this data to create SMART goals to inform instruction and develop interventions for students

who need remediation to meet proficiency. PLC teams reflect and celebrate student success and

achievement of SMART goals. They acknowledge and note instructional practices that went

well and what they want to do similarly or differently in the future. We are in the process of

creating a district wide data dashboard to display and monitor school and grade level progress

toward meeting our vision that all students will learn at high levels.

Mt. Vernon High School has a tiered system for instruction to ensure all students can

learn at high levels. All four levels of instruction are built into the daily master schedule and

have designated times throughout the school day. Tier I instruction is the uninterrupted high

quality classroom instruction that all students receive. This core instruction is standards based,

differentiated, and offers a variety of assessments that are used to monitor student progress

toward mastery as well as guide instruction. Tier II instruction is supplemental instruction that is

provided to students whose data shows a need for more intense instruction. Students in tier II are

given additional time to practice the strategies and skills. Tier II instruction is often delivered by

the teacher, but the addition of math and English language arts specialists to our staff for the

upcoming school year will assist us with the delivery of interventions. Tier I.5 instruction is the

differentiated instruction that students receive based on their individual learning needs or path.

Some students receive enrichment or an extension of learning while others receive remediation.

There are times when students need more intensive tier III instruction. Tier III is a wrap-around

approach to provide identified students the most intensive instructional supports. Tier III

instruction is in addition to the tier I and tier II supports in place and can occur at a great

frequency and/or a longer duration than tier II. Mt. Vernon High School has a daily Student

Resource Time (SRT) built into the schedule which allows for students to receive Tier II and Tier

3 interventions as appropriate. Additionally, students in need of support can also receive these

intervention supports when they have a scheduled study hall period or during a scheduled

resource period. Besides receiving interventions, students can also receive enrichment

opportunities during the SRT period as well.

We have hired specific teachers who serve as specialists. These specialists will work with

department teams and their students to provide targeted Tier II instruction based on students'

needs of learning the established ELs. Students who do not respond to Tier I through Tier II

instruction will be referred for tier III supports and/or intensified special education services

which will provide an array of individualized instruction for identified students. Mt. Vernon

High School will also implement data review meetings each month to review tier II and tier III

student data. During these data analysis discussions, teams may adjust the intervention, continue

the intervention, or dismiss the intervention if the student has shown mastery. At this time, all

progress monitoring will be reviewed.

GROWTH PLAN

Mt. Vernon High School's vision is that all students can and will learn at high levels. As a staff and school community, Mt. Vernon High School recognizes that while we certainly have areas of strength, we also have areas where we can continue to improve. For the purposes of this plan, we have identified two specific areas to focus upon for the 2021-2022 school year.

Area of Growth #1: *2.6 - Teachers have opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching.*

Based both on HRS survey data as well as our own observations, we have chosen leading indicator 2.6 as an area for growth as this will create the opportunity to have our staff engaged in instructional rounds as well as intentionally scheduling regular times for staff members to meet and discuss effective instructional practices. Analysis of the HRS Level 2 survey showed the Indicator 2.6 was an area of focus where we could make some gains as a building while it also represented an area that we felt could have a great impact on other areas as well.

As we begin this process, we want to take great care in establishing the reasoning behind implementing this practice. It is clear that Mt. Vernon is filled with a number of highly effective educators as our student performance data shows that we achieve at high levels as a whole student body. There are some highly effective practices taking place in classrooms all across the district. Part of beginning this instructional rounding process is to showcase those teachers that are performing amazing work in their classrooms and to be able to have other teachers be able to possibly incorporate those same practices in their own classrooms. This will also serve to further define what great instruction looks like at Mt. Vernon as teachers begin seeing some of the

practices they are using in their own classrooms show up in other teachers' rooms. However, as

good as we are, there is always room for improvement, and instructional rounds will provide the

opportunities to see where our practices can become even better and continue to push us to work

to be even better. We want to be sure that the "why" for this process has been thoroughly

communicated and that we have taken the time to build up staff buy-in and ownership of the

process. This will be accomplished through a series of meetings with teachers during their prep

periods. These meetings will include the following elements:

- Defining instructional rounds

- Celebrating effective practices already in place

- Recognizing that we can always improve

- Time for questions and clarifications

An advantage to this is that it will also allow for a variety of perspectives as there will be a mix

of teachers from different departments during each informal meeting.

As mentioned in the Maintenance Plan, MVCSC will be implementing a new classroom

walkthrough model which is directly related to the ten design questions in *The New Art and*

Science of Teaching (NASoT) as well as being cross-referenced with our current teacher

evaluation model. School leadership teams will develop a schedule that allows for teachers to

conduct instructional rounds once during the first semester and once during the second semester.

Teachers will observe at least one teacher in their content area, and at least one teacher in another

content area. All instructional rounds will be arranged in advance following a set schedule.

School administrators will provide teachers with information and criteria for instructional rounds

through in-person staff meetings, email, and shared slides and documents. Small teams of

teachers will visit a set number of classrooms and observe behaviors related to the NASoT

Snapshot. Post observation(s), the small teams will discuss what they saw during their 10-15 minute visit. As the leader of the team (administration or specialist) will facilitate the debriefing conversations. Debriefing conversations will include the following:

- What practices did you observe that reinforce your instructional strategies or practices?

- What practices did you observe that made you rethink your current instructional strategies or current practices?

- What new practice or strategy did you observe that you will develop for your own classroom?

Team members (teachers) will seek understanding about how an observed colleague designed strategies to align with one or more of the elements from NASoT. As a resource, each faculty member will be provided with their own copy of *The Handbook for the New Art and Science of Teaching*. Teachers will complete the debriefing questions and observation checklist, which includes NAaSoT elements.

We will work to provide specific examples of what each of the identified areas on the walkthrough model look like in the classroom as well. Great care will be taken to establish that this process is not for evaluative purposes and is for observation of teaching practices only. The focus should be on visiting teachers identifying things they are doing in their own classroom as well as practices they would like to try.

Teachers will be able to volunteer if they would like to have teams of teachers visit their classrooms during the rounds; however, all teachers are expected to participate in one of these

visits to another teacher's classroom at least once per semester. The observation schedule and

method to sign up as a volunteer will be managed using a digital system.

Following the instructional rounds, the team will meet to debrief and discuss the

observations. Each team would have a digital form to complete where they would complete a

reflection as well as record their observations based on their findings using the walkthrough

model. The form would include the following questions:

- What practices did you observe that reinforce your instructional strategies or

    practices?

- What practices did you observe that made you rethink your current instructional

    strategies or current practices?

- What new practice or strategy did you observe that you will develop for your own

    classroom?

Data from these digital forms will be shared with the staff periodically to show what instructional

practices have been observed and discussed. Specific feedback will be held in confidence with

the teachers involved.

Area of Growth #2: *3.4 - The school establishes clear and measurable goals that are*

focused on critical needs regarding improving overall student achievement at the

school level.

Leading indicator 3.4 is an additional targeted area for growth. One reason for selecting

this indicator as an area of focus is to be more intentional in establishing school-wide goals so

that a vision for what our students need to be able to know and do can be clearly articulated and

known by all staff members and the larger school community. By clearly defining the objectives

and goals, staff and students can be more aligned with how to strive toward achievement of those

goals. A second reason for the selection of this indicator is that in this upcoming school year, the

Indiana Department of Education is transitioning to requiring high schools to administer the SAT

to all Grade 11 students (as a replacement for the ISTEP+ assessments) and the student results on

the SAT will factor into school accountability measures. This provides a prime opportunity for

our school to deeply analyze the academic tasks that our students will need to be able to know

and perform when they do take the SAT. We will also be able to take advantage of the fact that

while the SAT is primarily divided into Math and Evidence-Based Reading and Writing sections,

the test is also further divided into subsections showing the link to Science and Social Studies

skills and knowledge.

The specific school-wide goals are as follows:

Goal Area	School-Wide Goal
Math	At least 75% of students will score at a proficient level or higher in mathematics as measured by the SAT Math assessment by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.
Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing	At least 75% of students will score at a proficient level or higher in Evidence-Based Reading and writing as measured by the SAT ERW assessment by the end of the 2021-2022 school year..

The specific targeted sub-group goals to address achievement gaps are as follows:

Goal Area	Targeted Sub-Group Goal
Math	At least 25% of special education students will score at a proficient level or higher in mathematics as measured by the SAT Math assessment by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.. Previous pass rate on state assessment was 12.4%.

Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing	At least 45% of special education students will score at a proficient level or higher in Evidence-Based Reading and writing as measured by the SAT ERW assessment by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.. Previous pass rate on state assessment was 22.0%.

A vital step will be to ensure that we communicate these overall goals to all staff and place particular emphasis on how the SAT has cross-curricular links to skills and knowledge so that teachers in all subject areas can be working toward these overall goals. As this plan was developed in a collaborative manner, teachers have already been involved in the identification of these goals. However, frequent review of these goals during staff meetings as well as during weekly PLC sessions can also remind and strengthen our resolve to stay dedicated to the achievement of these goals. Additionally, we will be working with PLC teams to help them form team goals that specifically outline SMART goals in the specific academic areas. While most of our collaborative teams are well-versed in the formulation of SMART goals, additional support will be provided via our English and math specialists as well as curriculum directors if necessary. Progress toward achievement of these goals will be monitored throughout the school year as PLC teams analyze their students' performance data in relation to the Essential Learnings that have previously been established. As this will be the transition year for the state of Indiana to move to using the SAT as its student achievement measure at the high school level, we will be using this year's results as a baseline, which we will then more closely link to our local student performance data. This monitoring will take place during the weekly meetings held by each PLC team.

CONCLUSION

The mission of the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation and Mt. Vernon High School is to "Engage, Educate, and Empower today's students to seize tomorrow's opportunities. Our vision states, "Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation is where parents choose to send their children, students are successful, highly qualified personnel desire to work, and the community is proud to support. We are committed to serving a diverse population in a safe, secure, and challenging learning environment where students are engaged in rigorous, relevant, and technology-enhanced curriculum." By working on the identified indicators throughout this next school year, Mt. Vernon High School staff will be able to promote and ensure high levels of learning for all students.

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